

Elections

Mission

To govern the fair, legal and orderly conduct of elections in Indiana.

Summary of Activities

Elections in Indiana are regulated and coordinated by the combined activities of the **Indiana Election Commission** and the Election Division of the **Office of the Secretary of State**. Those activities are described below:

Training: One of the most important goals of the Division, this is accomplished through seminars including an annual conference, publications, and website: <http://www.state.in.us/sos/elections>.



Overseeing Voter Registration: The Division and the Commission prescribe voter registration forms, compile and maintain a statewide voter registration file, and oversee day-to-day operation of the state's voter registration.

Enforcing Campaign Finance Law: The Division and the Commission administer the Indiana Campaign Finance Act, serving as the repository for campaign finance data from thousands of committees, and offering them for public inspection in the Division office and on <http://www.indianacampaignfinance.com/>. The Commission is empowered to levy penalties for violations.

Certifying Voting Systems: The Commission must approve all voting systems prior to their purchase by counties or use by voters in Indiana elections.

Maintaining Election Maps: The Division is required to maintain complete legal descriptions and maps for all precincts in the state, and approves proposed changes to those precincts.

Serving as Indiana's "Clearinghouse" for Election Law and Procedure: The Commission serves as a clearinghouse of information pertaining to election laws, administrative rules, and other data for county election officials, news media, political organizations, and the general public.

The Division and Commission are also responsible for printing and distributing the certifications of candidacy and official paper ballots for all federal, state and judicial offices, resolving candidate eligibility challenges, administering polling accessibility standards, and developing a uniform set of election forms for use throughout the State.

External Factors

The number of candidates and political committees filing with the state can drastically affect the amount of mailing and data processing costs the Division incurs during an election cycle. It also impacts the amount of fines incurred when a committee files late or not at all. This makes the income of the campaign finance program unpredictable. However, it is the Division's desire to lessen or even end late campaign finance filings through education and improved filing so the Division never counts on these funds when budget planning.

Several outside organizations conduct voter registration drives as part of their "get-out-the-vote" efforts. It is difficult to predict with any certainty how many of these drives will take place during a cycle and therefore difficult to determine the Division's print orders to provide forms free of charge, as required by law. Increased registrations also come from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and other public service facilities that are required to provide voter registration to their customers.

Evaluation and Accomplishments

The Election Division has begun to implement legislative changes, such as the use of a voter identification number for new and changed voter registrations, the adoption of provisional balloting beginning with the 2004 elections, and to work with county officials, voting system vendors, and the State Budget Agency to develop quantity purchase agreements and procedures to implement voting system improvements.

The Division has also continued to assist candidates and committees by improving campaign finance report software, and to enhance public access to campaign finance reports by making ongoing improvements to the Division's web site. The Division has continued to improve public access to information concerning legislative districts and precinct boundaries.

Finally, the Division continues to add features and improvements to their web pages so that Indiana voters have access to more information about candidates, election results, and other information to enhance meaningful participation in the election process.



Plans for the Biennium



Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) (P.L. 107-252) in October, 2002 which imposes new election requirements on states and calls for the upgrade of voting machines. More than \$2 billion was authorized by Congress in FY 2003 to help states with election reform efforts. It is estimated that Indiana will receive a total of \$55 million from these funds. The 2003 Indiana General Assembly then passed Senate Bill 268 which changed Indiana law to comply with the new federal law which calls for the improvement in the administration of elections, the educating of voters and training of election officials, the development of a state plan, the improvement and replacement of outdated voting systems, and the improvement in the accessibility of polling places. With these legislative directives the Election Division and the Office of the Secretary of State are in the process of implementing the mandates. The implementation will focus, among other things, on ensuring that all remaining punch card voting systems and lever systems are replaced in qualifying precincts by January 1, 2006.

